

Cycling UK Cymru briefing – Senedd election 2026

Safer roads for everyone

People of all ages and abilities should be able to walk, wheel and cycle safely and confidently along Welsh streets and rural roads. Traffic speeds are often too high, and too few drivers understand rules designed to prevent collisions and keep people safe. Fear of motor traffic is one of the most significant barriers preventing people in Wales from travelling actively.

Cycling UK's manifesto asks

The next Welsh Government should deliver:

- **Appropriate speed limits** that reflect local context and prioritise the safety of people walking, cycling, and wheeling. This should include signposting of quiet lanes in rural areas where people want to cycle.
- A dedicated **public awareness campaign explaining changes to the Highway Code** from 2022, especially the principle that those most at risk on the road should be given the most protection.
- **A focus on rural road safety**, including targeted infrastructure improvements and road safety awareness campaigns.
- New **national casualty reduction targets**, setting a path towards Vision Zero – ending all deaths and serious injuries on Welsh roads.

Context

A new Road Safety Framework for Wales with new targets for improving road safety is long overdue. [Data shows](#) that numbers of people killed on roads in Wales has reduced over the long-term, but progress has flatlined in recent years.

In Wales, men are 3 times more likely to cycle compared to women, and women, disabled people, and older people are often more affected by safety concerns, such as driver behaviour, high speeds on rural roads, and lack of protected space.

[Changes to the Highway Code](#) in 2022 aimed to increase safety of vulnerable road users. Included for the first time was a “Hierarchy of Road Users”, placing greater responsibility on those who can cause the most harm. However, [public awareness remains poor](#), and many drivers are still unclear about their obligations—particularly in relation to overtaking cyclists, giving priority to pedestrians at junctions, and safe passing distances.

Evidence and Impact

- High speed kills and deters cycling: Speed is a factor in half of collisions where someone is killed or seriously injured on Welsh roads. Concerns about safety is barrier to cycling with approx. 50% of respondents to a survey in Wales wanting slower speeds, fewer vehicles on the road and quieter routes to help them to cycle more.
- Cutting rural speed limits: A higher proportion of cyclists are killed or seriously injured on rural roads than on urban roads. In a survey a majority of people thought driving at 60mph is unsafe where there may be cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders, and half of people agreed that the default speed limit on single-carriageway rural roads should be reduced from 60mph – only 19% disagreed.
- Speed reduction saves lives: Evidence shows that reducing vehicle speeds, especially on rural roads, significantly cuts the number and severity of collisions.
- Health and inclusion benefits: Safer roads encourage physically active travel, supporting public health objectives and reduce transport inequalities.
- Economic benefit: Improving road safety reduces long-term costs to the NHS, emergency services and local authorities. Annual costs to society and the UK economy have been valued at £42bn.

Conclusion

Safer roads are a prerequisite for achieving Welsh ambitions on road safety, health and transport equality. By updating rural speed limits and ensuring that the 2022 Highway Code is understood and applied, Wales can create streets where people feel protected, empowered and able to choose greener, healthier modes of travel.